



News From

Maggie Brooks

Monroe County Executive

For Immediate Release

Wednesday, May 12, 2004

BROOKS ANNOUNCES FIRE PREVENTION PROGRAM

NYS Grant Promotes Smoke Alarm Distribution and Education

Monroe County Executive Maggie Brooks announced that the New York State Health Department has issued a \$15,000 grant to implement a program that will increase the number of smoke alarms in residential homes and help reduce the incidence of residential fires and fire-related injuries and deaths. The program is being led by the Monroe County Fire Bureau in partnership with three fire districts from the Town of Webster and the fire district in the Village of East Rochester. The state will also provide more than 1,500 smoke alarms for installation in the district homes.

"I applaud the County's Fire Bureau for pursuing this opportunity with the NYS Health Department. This grant may help save a life," said Brooks. "Very often the focus on smoke detectors or escape planning only occurs during Fire Prevention Week or daylight savings time when we are changing our clocks or installing new smoke detector batteries. Today's initiative will extend over a greater period of time and will aggressively seek to raise public awareness about the critical importance of installing smoke alarms in the home."

The United States Fire Administration (USFA) cites that the United States has one of the highest fire-related death rates among industrialized nations. Residential fire accounted for just 21% of fires reported in the US in 1999, but disproportionately caused 85% of the deaths and 75% of the injuries. The US residential fire-related death rate is higher among persons over the age of 64, children under the age of 5 years old, the poor, and those living in older housing stock.

"We are very pleased that here in Monroe County our fire-related death rate is below the national and state average, and our hope is that this project will enhance the current fire safety initiatives and programs that are already being taught in our community," said Brooks. "In addition to smoke alarm installation, the project will highlight a fire safety education campaign targeting community wide awareness and individualized education. Key to the message is encouraging the development of home escape plans and other fire prevention messages and tips. We hope to decrease the incidence of residential fires and fire-related injuries and deaths while increasing everyone's overall knowledge of fire safety," Brooks said.

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Data from the New York State Office of Fire Prevention and Control (OFPC) shows that the majority of fire-related deaths occurred between the hours of midnight and 4:00 a.m. OFPC also reports that during fatal residential fires in 1998, a smoke alarm was present 33.7% of the time, but was operational only 25.7% of the time.

Partners in the project include the Monroe County Fire Bureau, the East Rochester Village fire district, and three fire districts from Webster (Webster, West Webster and Union Hill). Partners in the project also include the Monroe County Department of Planning and Development, and the Monroe County Juvenile Fire Prevention Task Force.

Webster and East Rochester residents that wish to inquire about the program may call the Fire Prevention Program Office at 279-4063.